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BOOKS

An agent defends the CIA

The Night Watch. By David Atlee Phillips.
309 pages. Atheneum. \$9.95.

A recent book dealing with America's foreign intelligence operations, Joseph B. Smith's "Portrait of a Cold Warrior," was the work of a man who had resigned from the Central Intelligence Agency because he had been passed over for promotion. This new one is by a man who had just been promoted there to as high a post as could go, but resigned (in 1975) for loftier reasons. Conferring with a lecture agent, Phillips writes, "I asked him how much revenue I could expect from a year of lecturing about intelligence, attempting to set as much of the record straight on CIA as I legitimately and honestly could. 'I expect you can make between five and ten thousand dollars,' the agent said. 'But what about speaking against the CIA?' 'That way I can promise you between fifty and a hundred thousand dollars the first year.' I knew then I had made the right decision to resign."

One result of Phillips's decision was to organize the Association of Former Intelligence Officers. Another is this memoir of a quarter century in the Clandestine Services of the CIA, the section that conducts covert, or secret, operations in the American interest world-wide. Eventually he rose to become chief of the Western Hemisphere Division, along the way participat-

ing in such headline events as the overthrow of the communist president of Guatemala, the Bay of Pigs and missile-crisis episodes in Cuba, and the anti-Allende effort in Chile. (He discusses all of these at length.) Given such a background, Phillips's testimony ranks among the most authoritative to be heard thus far in defense of the nation's intelligence establishment, taking its place alongside Lyman B. Kirkpatrick's "The Real CIA" (1968) and Ray S. Cline's recent "Secrets, Spies, and Scholars." The time, some would feel, is none too soon: the volume is dedicated to Richard Welch, the Chief of Station in Athens who was murdered as a result of identification of Agency personnel by one of the gaggle of Leftist gangs dedicated to destroying our intelligence capability.

Persons interested in later-day international affairs will find much to intrigue them in the interpretation offered here. Other readers merely enticed by a peek at the workings of a closed government bureau will have a fine time, though they should understand that the author put nothing in print which "would violate my Secrecy Oath with CIA." He was not one of the Oldest Boys in the Agency, being neither a veteran of the wartime Office of Strategic Services nor yet an Ivy Leaguer (he attended Texas Christian University in his native Fort Worth), qualifications at one time requisite for a high posting in the Clandestine Services.

As a writer Phillips's tone is muted, indeed almost bland when making a case against "the kiss-and-tell authors [who] were becoming folk heroes on college campuses." Nevertheless his story is smoothly told, replete with anecdote and glimpses of celebrities ranging from Ernest Hemingway to "Kim" Philby. There are assessments in passing of the six Directors of the CIA he has known and a favorable portrait of the "legendary" James Angleton, the Agency's counter-espionage chief. We learn that, at the height of public uneasiness about the intelligence

establishment, that "soldier-priest," Director William E. Colby, saw fit to erect a statue of Nathan Hale outside CIA's Langley headquarters! There is a grab-bag of data about intelligence "tracecraft." Among miscellanea we find that the bugged olive in our martini is a myth.

"The Night Watch" has an index but no bibliography, notes, or illustrations. It remains, notwithstanding, a well-rounded statement of belief by a moderate, sophisticated practitioner of a cause. It is withal an elaboration upon a statement of purpose recently enunciated by one of the author's former superiors in CIA.

"Sincere people on all sides of the U.S.

Intelligence issue may disagree radically. But, I think — and hope — we can agree that: First, while an intelligence system may function with much greater ease and effectiveness in a closed society, it's in support of the wrong cause. Secondly, that the difficulties the U.S. intelligence system may encounter from time to time are far outweighed by the values which create these problems and make our job of defending them under any circumstances worthwhile."

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Mr Davis worked for both OSS and CIA